

S O M E  
O B S E R V A T I O N S  
C O N C E R N I N G

The W O M A N of *Godlyman*  
In *Surrey*.

Made at *Guilford* on *Sunday*, Nov. 20. 1726.

T E N D I N G

To prove her extraordinary Deliveries  
to be a Cheat and Imposture.

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By CYRIACUS AHLERS, Surgeon to  
His Majesty.

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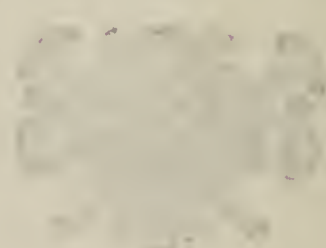
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THE  
P R E F A C E  
TO THE  
R E A D E R.



*THE following Sheets contain a short, and fair, Narrative of the Observations I made at Guilford, concerning the Woman of Godlyman in Surrey, whose uncommon Deliveries are now become the general Talk of the Town. It is drawn up with all possible Candour ; and the Facts, whether seen or transacted by me, faithfully stated, and*  
a *al-*



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*altogether agreeable to the Report I had the Honour to make to his Majesty immediately upon my Return from thence. I had no Thoughts at first to appear with it in Print; but being call'd upon in so publick a manner, I could not, in justice to my own Reputation, deny that Gentleman as publick a Satisfaction. Let the Event of this Affair be what it will, I dare appeal to every judicious and impartial Reader, whether I had not sufficient Reason to suspect a Fraud and Imposture, and whether I could not upon very good Grounds venture to declare it openly, as I will not deny to have done. I was very much surpriz'd to find, at the latter End of the Narrative publish'd by Mr. St. André, several Affidavits concerning me, and my Conduct at Guilford; none indeed tending to prove the Truth of what was attested in the Narrative itself, but all purely levell'd at my Character and Reputation. By the following Account, which I do here most solemnly declare to be true in every*

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*every Particular, having asserted nothing therein, but what I can take upon me, and what I my self saw, heard, or transacted, it will appear, that it agrees in some Particulars with the Depositions mention'd above; but greatly differs in others. I must own, that it grieved me to find so many apparent Untruths therein sworn to; several of which, for being too trifling, I forbear mentioning at present: But it is absolutely necessary that I should clear up two Points, upon which both the officious Gentlemen, who, out of a tender, though undeserved, Regard for the Vindication of my Character, were pleased to procure the Affidavits aforesaid, and to subjoin them to their Narrative, and upon which the Persons that swore to the Truth thereof seem to have laid the greatest Stress of their Evidence. These are, I. My telling Mr. Tho. Howard, That I EXTRACTED the Loins and Inferior Parts of the Rabbit, which I brought away from Mary Toft, OUT OF THE UTERUS. II. My Refusal to stay at Guilford, to take away the Rest of*



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the Parts of the aforesaid Rabbet, *altho'* very much pressed *both* by Mr. J. and Mr. Tho. Howard. *As to the first of these two Points, which, in the Corrected Edition of the Narrative, was expressed in Capital Letters, it is so very absurd and ridiculous, that it scarce needs any Reply at all. Was I to grant, that I did make use of these very Expressions, which Mr. Howard swears I did, would it have done the Cause any good? Surely, it would be an inexcusable Presumption in me to imagine, that the Publick should believe a Thing, for no other Reason, but because I believ'd, and said so. I do not deny, but that at Guilford I behaved my self all along, like one who was perfectly satisfied of the Matter: I had very good Reasons for so doing; and was not ashamed to own it upon my Return. But as to the Terms in Mr. Howard's Affidavit, I do aver, that I never so much as thought of them, till I found them in Print. Having had no manner of Reason, no private Views,*

*nor*

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*nor indeed any Motive at all, that could induce me to disguise my Conduct, I flatter my self, that I shall be allow'd in justice, at least so much Credit and Belief, as People can pretend to, who, when once concern'd in an Imposture, will venture every thing to go through with it. As to the second Point, My Refusal to stay at Guilford, till the Woman was deliver'd of the remaining Parts of the sixteenth Rabbet, Part whereof I had extracted in the Morning, this is something more material; and insinuates plainly, as if the Rabbet, which I brought to Town with me, and which I had the Honour to shew to his Majesty, and afterwards to several Persons of Note and Distinction, was not come away from the Woman during my Stay at Guilford. There being no Mention made of this Particular in the Evidence of the Women, I will confine my self to the Affidavit of Mr. John, and Mr. Tho. Howard. I do suppose, in the first Place, that these two Gentlemen*  
*made*



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*made proper Allowances, for that the Exclusion of Mr. Brand, whom Mr. John Howard would not suffer to come with me into the Patient's Room, depriv'd me of a proper Witness, to attest what past on both sides. This was most certainly a Hardship upon me, and, beyond all doubt, done with some sinister View. The Intention of these Affidavits, and indeed the necessary Consequences, evidently tending to an indirect Accusation, not only of a gross Imposture, for which, were I guilty of it, I ought to be severely punished; but, moreover, of a notorious Breach of Faith to the King my Master, for which I should deservedly incur his utmost Displeasure, my Honour and Reputation call loudly for Redress and Satisfaction, which I shall endeavour to obtain in the most publick and ample manner. I could, indeed, in my own Defence, previously insist upon the very Improbability of the Thing; I could alledge the Character of a Man of Honesty and Probity;—which I*  
*have*



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*have hitherto bore, and hope to preserve among all those I have the Honour to be acquainted withal, and which hath made me not unworthy to be employ'd in his Majesty's Service; but I shall purposely avoid these, and the like Proofs, being able to produce others still stronger, to evince the contrary; I mean, the joint Evidence of Mr. Brand, who was with me at Guilford, and Mr. Ziegler, who lives with Mr. Jagers the King's Apothecary, and who are both ready to attest upon Oath, the first, that in his Presence Mr. Howard inform'd me of the Delivery of the Head; that I begg'd, and obtain'd it of him; that I put it up with the other Parts, and that I enquir'd after the Intestines and Feet: The second, that on Tuesday Evening he deliver'd a Message to me from Mr. Howard, informing me of the Delivery of the seventeenth Rabbet, and requesting me to send back mine, being the sixteenth, according to Promise. After all, if my Endeavours have been any ways serviceable,*

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*viceable, to find out the Truth of this Matter, I shall think them well bestowed; and as to the rest, generously overlook the scandalous Aspersions, and malicious Insinuations of some Persons, of whom I had no reason to expect such Usage.*

CYRIACUS AHLERS.



P O S T

## POSTSCRIPT.

**M**Onsieur *St. André* having asserted in his Narrative (*pag. 20.*) that all the Facts, as by him there related, were verified before His Majesty on *Saturday, Nov. 26.* Dr. *Steigerthal* and Dr. *Teissier* being present, I was desired by Dr. *Steigerthal*, to inform the Publick in his Name, that he all along suspected this whole Affair to be a Fraud and Imposture, and was far from thinking the comparative Anatomy, which is there mention'd by Mr. *St. André*, any ways satisfactory to verifie his Assertions.

CYRIACUS AHLERS.

Decemb. 8. 1726.







SOME  
OBSERVATIONS  
CONCERNING

The WOMAN of GODLYMAN, &c.



ON Saturday, Nov. 19. 1726.  
I went, with his Majesty's  
Leave, to Guilford, there  
to enquire into the Condi-  
tion of the Woman, who was said to  
have been delivered of fifteen Rabbits,  
and to inform my self of all the Cir-  
cumstances of this uncommon Event,  
in order to make my Report to His Ma-  
jesty. I set out that Afternoon at

A

Four

Four of the Clock, in Company with Mr. *Brand*, a Relation of Mr. *Fager*, the King's Apothecary. We lay at *Cobham*, and did not reach *Guilford* till *Sunday* the 20th, at Ten in the Morning. We took our Lodgings at the *White-Hart*, where we did not stay above a quarter of an Hour : For the Drawer, who said, he was just come from Mr. *Howard*, informing us, that he was at Home, we went strait to his House. As we came in they told us, that he would be with us presently ; but about half an Hour after they said, that he was gone to dress the Mayor of the Town. After we had been waiting full three quarters of an Hour, he at last came to us, dress'd in his Night-gown ; and having been told by me, by whose Leave I came, and about what Business, he informed me in presence of Mr. *Brand*, that the Woman

had



had been already delivered of fifteen Rabbits, and was just now fallen in Labour of a sixteenth.

We had been told at the Inn, that they heard Mr. *Howard* say, that the Rabbit had not been perceiv'd to leap, as it usually did, for about six Hours; but Mr. *Howard* himself assur'd us, that it had left off leaping ever since *Saturday* Ten of the Clock in the Morning, and that he presumed it must be dead since that Time.

Hereupon we went to the Woman's Lodging, which was over-against Mr. *Howard's* House, who would not suffer my Companion to come into the Room where the Patient was, for fear, as he said, that too much Company should frighten her; for which Reason also he order'd the Nurse to see, that the Door might be well fasten'd, and to suffer no body to come in: Nevertheless, a

little while after, several Women went in and out, as they pleased. The Door being lock'd, the Nurse told us, that the Skin dropp'd down from her just now. Mr. *Howard* thereupon examin'd the Patient, whom we found sitting in a narrow Elbow-Chair. I was preparing to do the same ; but was prevented by Mr. *Howard*, who said, he would let me know when it was convenient.

The Nurse, in the mean time, at our Desire, shew'd us the Skin, laid in a Basin. I touch'd it, and found it to feel something warm, a little moist round the Border ; but every where else dry ; and the Hair appeared smooth and even. Upon unfolding it, I could discern some small Blood-Vessels on the inside ; but found not the least Drop of Blood, nor any Appearance of Water or Membranes. It smelt  
very

very fresh, like the Skin of a wild Rabbet, just stripp'd. I asked Mr. *Howard*, how it was possible for the Rabbet to have been thus stripp'd of its Skin in the Woman's Belly ; to which he answered, He apprehended, that it must be owing to the violent Pression of the Womb against the *Os Pubis*. The Patient, who continued all the while sitting in her Elbow-Chair, with her Stays on, was now desired by Mr. *Howard* to walk a little about the Room. I found her Pulse very easy and quiet, without the least Appearance of any feverish Disorder : There was little or no Swelling in her Belly, which, I must own, surpriz'd me very much. I likewise examin'd her Breasts, which I found relax'd, without any Hardness in the Glands, and no Milk in them ; only upon squeezing, a little clear Serum came out, scarce enough to wet the  
tip



tip of my Finger. I asked, whether the Swelling of her Belly had ever been greater : And was answered by the Nurse, That all along it had been much at one ; only that sometimes a little Swelling was observ'd about the Stomach, which quickly disappeared again. I ask'd the Patient herself some Questions ; but could obtain no Answers from her : And Mr. *Howard* said, he would take care to inform me fully of every Circumstance relating to her Case. I observ'd her with some Attention, as she was walking about the Room, and found that she press'd her Knees and Thighs close together, as if she was afraid something might drop down, which she did not care to lose.

Not long after she pretended to fall in Labour, and behaved herself in the following manner : She stood with her Knees close together against the  
 Seat

Seat of an ordinary Chair, and holding the upper Part of it fast with her Hands, she began to squall and roar, and to move the upper Parts of her Body in a very strange Manner, twisting it from one side to another. I could not help wondering at her pressing her Knees so close together, and not choosin<sup>g</sup> rather to keep them asunder, to make way for the Birth; but doubtless she knew best, what Posture was the most advantageous for her singular Delivery.

Mr. *Howard* and I, in the mean time, conversing together, and the Discourse happening to turn upon Subjects, which made us laugh, the Patient laugh'd very heartily with us, which I thought so extraordinary for a Woman in her Condition, that I could not forbear looking at Mr. *Howard*, who, in her Excuse, told me, that she

had



had an excellent Constitution, and did not matter her Labour-pains, as soon as they were over. Her Pulse continued all the while pretty easy and quiet, excepting only, that when she had been in Agitation for some time, it went a little quicker. She was now ordered by Mr. *Howard* to sit down again in her Elbow-Chair, upon which he examin'd her, and sat himself down opposite to her upon another Chair, in a Posture which appeared to me very uncommon, and indeed not a little Suspicious : He made her put her Legs between his, and with his Knees he press'd hers close together. There was a small Charcoal-fire lighted in the Room, and they were both sitting hard by the Chimney, after such a manner, that it was impossible for me to observe distinctly what they were doing, and in particular to mind the

Motions



Motions of Mr. *Howard's* right Hand. It was now about a Quarter before Twelve, when the Woman fell into fresh Labour-pains, beginning a-new to cry out very strangely. Mr. *Howard* continued all the while to keep her Knees close together ; and holding his Head against hers, he took her Hands into his, whilst she stooping with her Head forwards, push'd her Back against the Back of the Chair with such Violence, that I was forc'd to hold the Chair to prevent its going over. She repeated the same afterwards at two or three different Times. Those Pains being gone off, Mr. *Howard* examin'd her again, and then suffer'd me to do the same, which accordingly I did. Upon touching her, I presently perceived some broken Bones, and advancing with my Finger, I discover'd a

B fleshy

fleshy Body, which with the Bones stood a little way out of the Orifice of the *Vagina*. The *Vagina* was strongly contracted, closely embracing the Body, which presented itself, and which I conjectur'd to be the hind Part of a Rabbet, stripp'd of the Skin. The extreme Dryness of the Parts, the strong Contraction of the *Vagina*, and the Apprehension I was under, lest the Fore-Part should be in the same Condition with that I felt, made me proceed with some Caution, insomuch that I resolv'd rather to wait the Return of new Labour-pains, than by using any Violence, to tear and to injure the *Vagina*. Having retired for these Reasons, Mr. *Howard* ask'd me, whether I would not extract it; and upon my answering, No, he offer'd to make it easier for me, pretending, that



that his Fingers were slenderer than mine: Accordingly he examin'd her, and presently desir'd me to touch her again, which I did, and found the Body abovesaid advanced a little way; but when I laid hold of it, the *Vagina* contracted itself so strongly, that it snapp'd back again full the Breadth of a Finger. Upon this I would have desisted a second Time; but Mr. *Howard* observing it, urg'd me in strong Terms to proceed. So I took hold again, and to my surprize drew it out with all imaginable Ease. I found it to be only the hind Part of a Rabbet bent in a singular manner, and again without the least Drop of Blood, or any Moisture. I was in no small Surprize at what I had hitherto seen and transacted; and being previously told by Mr. *Howard*, that the Head and second Part



were still behind, I would fain have examin'd her farther, to look for them; but Mr. *Howard* would not permit it, saying, That he would deliver her of what was left, himself; in order to which he sat himself down before her in the Posture above describ'd. I was very much startled at this; and the Woman soon falling into fresh Labour-pains, I very earnestly renew'd my Instances; telling him, that to search her now she was in Labour, would best enable me to judge what Condition the Womb and its Orifice were in, and where the remaining Parts of the Rabbet lay. But he remain'd constant in his Denial, and with a sudden high Colour in his Face, answer'd me, *By no Means*; alledging, that Mr. *St. André* himself had examin'd her but twice, and that therefore I

ought

ought to be satisfied with having extracted part of it my self.

By this Time I began to conceive a violent Suspicion of the whole Matter ; but thought fit to conceal it, having resolv'd to behave my self all along, like one, who had no Reason to be dissatisfied. Nay, I feigned a great Compassion for the Woman's Case, which gave Mr. *Howard* an Opportunity to represent to me, that I could not but observe, what pains he must have been at, and still took, and what the poor Woman had suffered ; and that he hoped His Majesty would be so gracious, when all was over, as to give them a Pension, there being many that had Pensions, who did not deserve them. I promised him, that I would not fail in my Report to His Majesty,



Majesty, to remember them in the best  
 Manner I could. The Woman having,  
 in the mean time, overcome another  
 of her pretended Pains, Mr. *Howard*  
 examin'd her a good while ; when of  
 a sudden starting and making an Out-  
 cry, he ask'd, *Did I hurt you ?* And  
 she answer'd, *Yes.* A little while af-  
 ter new Pains following, Mr. *Howard*  
 said, he hop'd the remaining Part  
 would now shortly present itself,  
 wherein also he was not disappointed ;  
 for not long after he deliver'd her of  
 it, and presented it to me. I found  
 it to be the Fore-part of a Rabbet,  
 looking a little redder than the hind  
 Part, which I had brought away from  
 her, otherwise without any Appearance  
 of Blood and Water, something warm  
 to the Touch, and smelling very fresh  
 like a wild Rabbet, stripp'd of its Skin  
 but



but a little while ago. There was nothing remaining but the Head, Intestines, and Feet.

Much about this Time Mr. *Howard* was sent for to Dinner ; but I desir'd that he would stay till the Woman was deliver'd of the remaining Parts, and then dine with me at the Inn, which he consented to.

This gave me an Opportunity of sending for my Companion, under pretext of ordering the Dinner ; but when he came into the Room, I desired him in *High-German*, to mind what Posture both Mr. *Howard* and the Patient were in, being that above describ'd, and then gave him, in *English*, Orders, to provide a Dinner for us. Having all along express'd a great Concern

cern for the Woman's Condition, Mr. *Howard* and she, after some other Pains, and before the Delivery of the Head, laugh'd very heartily, as did also the Nurse; tho' I did not see that they had any Reason for so doing, unless it was to divert themselves with my feigned Compassion.

This Piece of Diversion, and some other Pains being over, Mr. *Howard* desir'd the Woman to lie down, which she did accordingly, and was then to all Appearance pretty easy.

About Two of the Clock I ask'd Mr. *Howard*, whether he would go to Dinner; but he said, it was time enough; and that if we staid a little longer she would be, perhaps, deliver'd of the Head.

About

About half an Hour after (during which Time, Mr. *Howard* sat by the Patient's Bed-side, and sometimes supported her Knees) perceiving, that the Head was not in any forwardness, we went to Dinner. At Dinner Mr. *Howard* told me, that the Woman was a great Lover of salt Beef, and that with my Leave he would send her some ; accordingly she had a good Piece sent her, tho' it happen'd to be pretty hard, and was very much salted.

We had not been long at Dinner, when Mr. *Howard*'s elder Brother, whom I had seen before in the Patient's Room, came in. I desir'd him to sit down with us ; and the Discourse quickly falling on the Woman's Case,



I renew'd my Promises to remember them all in my Report to His Majesty. Soon after, Mr. *Howard*, Jun. being sent for, went away, saying, he would come again presently, leaving his Brother with me.

Altho' I at first intended to stay two or three Days, yet considering what had past, and reflecting in particular upon the repeated Denials of Mr. *Howard*, Jun. that I should not examine the Patient any more, I found that it would be to no purpose to continue there longer.

However, I still thought it best to conceal my Suspicion, and therefore complain'd of a violent Head - ach, which, I said, made me desirous to return to *London* with all possible Speed. Accordingly

Accordingly I order'd the Coach to be got ready. Mr. *Howard*, Sen. continuing to keep me Company at Table, I could not altogether forbear dropping a few Words of the Surprize I was in, with regard, in particular, to the Dryness of the Woman's Delivery, and the Unwillingness of his Brother to let me touch and examine her, after the Delivery of the hind Part of the Rabbet, which I extracted my self ; but he answer'd, that he did not know what Reason his Brother had to deny me this Satisfaction.

Mr. *Howard*, Jun. not returning according to his Promise, I went straight to his House, with his Brother and Mr. *Brand* ; but not finding him at Home, and being willing to give the Woman something, we went up all

together to her Chamber, and found Mr. *Howard*, Jun. with her, who told me, as soon as we came into the Room, that he had just now deliver'd her of the Head ; which he gave me to feel, it being pretty duskyish, and as yet no Light in the Room. It felt warm, and was a little Moist.

I forgot to mention, that before we went to Dinner, I desir'd Mr. *Howard* to let me take the Skin, with the Fore and Hind-part of the Rabbet, along with me, to shew them to His Majesty, which at first he would not consent to : But having promised him that I would take care to send them back again, he permitted me to take them, and so I put them up in an Ox's Bladder, which I had sent for, and turn'd the Inside out. I now beg'd  
likewise



likewise the Head of him, and put it up with the rest, in Presence of Mr. *Brand*, who was this Time suffer'd to come in.

I then told Mr. *Howard* of my Intention to return to *London*, and gave the Woman something. But before I went away, I desir'd Mr. *Howard* to shew me some of the Things, which he had brought away from the Woman before. He produced several Pieces, which I look'd over in some haste, being unwilling to stay much longer. However, I ask'd what was become of the Stomach and smaller Guts, to which he answer'd, that he did not mind and preserve them. I likewise ask'd after the Guts and Feet of the Rabbet I was taking with me: To which he replied, that he fancy'd they  
were

were fallen to the Ground, and got under our Feet. He shew'd me among other Pieces, the Back of a pretty large Rabbet, wherein finding some Parts of the *Intestinum Rectum* remaining, with Pellets of hard Excrements in it, I desir'd he would let me have one; upon which he took one out with a Pin, and presented it to me in a Box, saying, that he had given the like to Mr. *St. André*, and Mr. *Molyneux*. He also read some Papers of his to me, concerning the Woman's Case, from the beginning of her Illness, which being pretty well known in Town, I did not much attend to. I took my Leave of the two Brothers, and left *Guilford* about Five in the Evening, with Mr. *Brand*. We lay at *Cobham*, and came to Town on *Monday* about One of the Clock, when I repair'd

pair'd forthwith to *Kensington*, to make my Report to His Majesty by Word of Mouth.

Before I proceed to the Description of the several Parts of the Rabbet, which I took along with me, it may not be amiss to take Notice, that on *Tuesday* Evening, being at Mr. *Fager's* House, Mr. *Ziegler*, his Man, who had been at *Guilford* that Day, deliver'd a Message to me from Mr. *Howard*, to let me know, that since my Departure she had been deliver'd of another, and that he believ'd, she would have no more. He withal desir'd me, as soon as possible, to send back the Rabbet, according to my Promise; which I would have certainly done, if I had not receiv'd Commands not to part with it till further Orders.

*For*





*For the Satisfaction of the Publick, I will here subjoin the Anatomical Description of the several Parts of the Sixteenth Rabbet, which I brought with me to Town.*

**T**HE Skin, as it lay extended, was eight Inches long, and four and a half broad, where broadest, unequally torn with many Holes up and down, and several Pieces of Fat, particularly about the Extremities.

The Head was four Inches and a half long, from the Nose to the Extremity of the Ears, and cover'd with the Skin, all over, except a small Bit, which should have cover'd part of the lower Jaw, but was tore off.

The

The first *Vertebra* of the Neck was luxated, and the Muscles about it lacerated ; but the third *Vertebra* was cut in the Middle ; the transverse Processes between the first and third *Vertebra* broke off, with the Muscles round it, the Marks of a sharp Instrument appearing very plainly.

The Fore-part was two Inches three Quarters along the Back-bone ; there was some part of the Abdominal Muscles left, which I found ripp'd open lengthways : The *Diaphragm* was in its proper Situation, closing the Cavity of the *Thorax* ; but I found it necessary to open it, to look for the Heart and Lungs, which I did in Presence of Dr. *Steigerthal*. I found the *Foramen Ovale* as yet open ; and having took the Lungs out and laid them in Water, they swam on the Surface ; there was

D some

some part of the *Œsophagus* left, most of the Ribs were broke along the *Vertebrae* of the Back on both Sides, and some of them in two Places, and the Muscles about the Fractures lacerated ; the Ligaments of the *Vertebrae* were very much distended, and the *Spina Dorsi* itself broke in two Places. Some of the external Muscles were likewise tore, and the right *Scapula* a little separated from the Ribs : Part of the right Fore-leg was broke off, and the Remainder of the *Ulna* and *Radius* stood out in two large Shivers ; the Muscles thereabouts were tore. On the left Side, the *Radius* and *Ulna* were entirely wanting, and even the lower Part of the *Os Humeri* cut off, with some sharp Instrument, as it appeared very plain.



Two of the false Ribs were left with the *Vertebræ* of the Loins, which were very visibly cut off from the first, with a sharp Instrument, and all the Ligaments of the *Vertebræ* very much relaxed, that it was no difficult Matter to bend it ; there was a good Part of the Abdominal Muscles left with this, and they had been cut transverse-ly. All the Abdominal Contents were wanting, except the Urinary and Parts of Generation, with about two Inches of the *Intestinum Rectum*. I found several Pellets of hard Excrements, two of which I took out, in Presence of Mr. *Amyand*, and observ'd small Bits of Hay, Straw and Corn in them ; some Fat appeared in several Parts ; the *Tibia* of the right Hind-leg was cut off near the Articulation, with the Bones of the *Tarsus*, and a small Bit  
of

of Skin was left there. There was likewise Part of the left Leg chopp'd off, just a-crofs the Bones of the *Tarsus* ; the Tail was entire, somewhat above two Inches long, and almost covered with the Skin.

F I N I S.

